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EVERYTHING IS HORRIBLE AND WONDERFUL DISCUSSION GUIDE

- 1 The memoir delves deeply into the author's personal experience of grief, but also powerfully reveals Harris to the reader in all of his brilliance, charm, and flaws. After finishing the book, how would you characterize Stephanie's depiction of her brother? What impression do you have of Harris?
- 2 The Wittels had to navigate grief with the added complexity of Harris being a very public figure. What do you think of Stephanie's analysis of grieving in the age of social media?
- 3 Has the opioid crisis affected you? If so, what impact did this book have on you?
- 4 A January 2018 article in the *New York Times* by writer Meghan Daum discusses the unique challenges of the memoir genre, elaborating on "a certain kind of memoir—call it the hardest kind to write—that sets out not to tell a story but, rather, to tell why a story cannot adequately be told. To even reach this point, the memoirist must decide whether the complications are worth unraveling..." There are big themes in this book—grief, addiction, untimely death—that will never be 'nicely packaged' or 'solved.' Still, what new insight or information does Stephanie's book offer regarding those themes?
- 5 Do you think writing this book brought Stephanie closure? In your opinion, what do you think it is about the act of writing that can be so therapeutic for many people?
- 6 Stephanie writes in a conversational, candid, and poignant style. What do you think gave her the courage to put such a personal, heartbreaking story out in the world?
- 7 The book deals with the grief of suddenly losing a loved one to an overdose, but the author's experience also overlaps with other experiences of grief or trauma. Even if you have not gone through a loss similar to Stephanie's, did you recognize or could you relate to any of the emotions she describes here?
- 8 Stephanie shares not only her own navigation of Harris's addiction, and later her grieving process, but that of her parents. Discuss how each family member handled these challenges, and whether age, gender, relationship to Harris, etc., affected their processing of emotions.
- 9 Coexisting with Stephanie's grief over Harris is her experience of motherhood. How does Stephanie's role as a mother to Iris affect her during this time period?
- 10 Harris coined the term "humblebrag." Had you heard the term before? Take turns crafting your own fictional (or non-!) humblebrag.

